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The Developmental Relationships Framework

Young people are more likely to grow up successfully when they experience developmental relationships with important people in their lives. Developmental relationships are close connections through which young people discover who they are, cultivate abilities to shape their own lives, and learn how to engage with and contribute to the world around them. Search Institute has identified five elements—expressed in 20 specific actions—that make relationships powerful in young people's lives.

Elements	Actions	Definitions
Express Care Show me that I matter to you.	• **Expect my best**.....Expect me to live up to my potential. • **Stretch**.....Push me to go further. • **Hold me accountable**...Insist I take responsibility for my actions. • **Reflect on failures**.....Help me learn from mistakes and setbacks.	
Challenge Growth Push me to keep getting better.		
Provide Support Help me complete tasks and achieve goals.	• **Navigate**.....Guide me through hard situations and systems. • **Empower**.....Build my confidence to take charge of my life. • **Advocate**.....Stand up for me when I need it. • **Set boundaries**.....Put limits in place that keep me on track.	
Share Power Treat me with respect and give me a say.	• **Respect me**.....Take me seriously and treat me fairly. • **Include me**.....Involve me in decisions that affect me. • **Collaborate**.....Work with me to solve problems and reach goals. • **Let me lead**.....Create opportunities for me to take action and lead.	
Expand Possibilities Connect me with people and places that broaden my world.	• **Be dependable**.....Be someone I can trust. • **Listen**.....Really pay attention when we are together. • **Believe in me**.....Make me feel known and valued. • **Be warm**.....Show me you enjoy being with me. • **Encourage**.....Praise me for my efforts and achievements.	• **Inspire**.....Inspire me to see possibilities for my future. • **Broaden horizons**.....Expose me to new ideas, experiences, and places. • **Connect**.....Introduce me to people who can help me grow.

NOTE: Relationships are, by definition, bidirectional, with each person giving and receiving. So each person in a strong relationship both engages in and experiences each of these actions. However, for the purpose of clarity, this framework is expressed from the perspective of one young person.

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